United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1510
29 October 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNOSOM II mandate for interim period to 18 November, to allow Secretary-General more time for in-depth report and "related consultations"; reiterates commitment to future concerted strategy and consideration of Operation's humanitarinan, political and security activities.

+ General Assembly elects Argentina, Czech Republic, Oman, Rwanda and Nigeria as non-permanent members of Security Council, for two-year terms beginning 1 January 1994.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, condemns massacre of civilians in Bosnian village of Stupni Do by Croatian Defence Council troops, and attacks on UNPROFOR and humanitarian convoy.

+ General Assembly pays tribute to memory of President Melchior Ndadaye of Burundi, killed in coup d'état last week; UNHCR to send second mission to Rwanda to coordinate relief programmes for Burundi refugees.

+ Secretary-General, finding lack of progress in implementing Bicesse Accords in Angola, recommends new Security Council measures against UNITA, but not before 1 December as political talks are underway; recommends more personnel for UNAVEM II, to be deployed in event of breakthrough.

+ General Assembly President, at First Committee observance of Disarmament Week, says danger of nuclear proliferation is causing new alarm; suggests United Nations meeting of regional organizations to enhance cooperation in field of peace and security.

+ General Assembly calls on States to ratify international instruments on drug control and to carry out effective control activities; stresses importance of Commission on Narcotic Drugs and United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

+ Secretary-General recommends that Security Council maintain UNOMIG at present strength for further three months, with interim mandate to maintain contacts with Abkhaz and Georgian sides and to monitor situation; plans for political talks under United Nations auspices.

+ Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, says proposed military liaison team in Phnom Penh would work with Cambodian Government and Armed Forces, and report to him on security matters in country; team would serve for a single, six-month period.

* * *

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Security Council this afternoon decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for an interim period until 18 November. By unanimously adopting resolution 878 (1993), the Council asked the Secretary-General to report before that date on recent developments in Somalia, in order to enable it to decide on a further extension of the mandate.

The Council reiterated its commitment to a future concerted strategy for UNOSOM II and to undertake an "in-depth consideration of its humanitarian, political and security activities" on the basis of the Secretary-General's specific suggestions. Its action this afternoon was in response to a letter by the Secretary-General, dated 28 October, in which he requested the interim extension of the mandate to allow time for the preparation of the in-depth report and for "other related consultations".

Last March, the Council voted to expand the size and mandate of UNOSOM II. That mandate, authorized through 31 October, provided for enforcement action to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations and reconstruction throughout Somalia. The Operation was further charged with monitoring cease-fire and other agreements and empowered to take appropriate action against any faction violating them. It was also charged with seizing the small arms of all unauthorized armed elements and protecting with force the staff, installations and equipment of the United Nations and other relief organizations.

* * *

The General Assembly this morning elected Argentina, the Czech Republic, Oman, Rwanda and Nigeria as non-permanent members of the Security Council, for two-year terms beginning 1 January 1994. Candidates are put forward by their regional groups, based on negotiations held prior to elections, or, if a group has not been able to endorse the required number of candidates, the names of all interested countries are presented.

As the Security Council is a principal organ of the United Nations, the election of members has to be by secret ballot and requires a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Retiring members of the Council

(more)

cannot immediately be re-elected.

* * *

The Security Council last night condemned the massacre of the civilian population in the Bosnian village of Stupni Do on 23 October by troops of the Croatian Defence Council. In a statement issued by its President, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg (Brazil), the Council also said that it had heard accounts of attacks against the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) by armed persons bearing uniforms of the Bosnian Government forces, and of an attack on an UNPROFOR-protected humanitarian convoy on 25 October in central Bosnia. The Council expressed concern about the preliminary information to the effect that regular and organized armed forces had probably been involved in those acts of violence.

The Council said that it had asked the Secretary-General to submit, as soon as possible, a complete report on the responsibility for those acts. It was prepared to draw all the relevant conclusions from the report, which would also be transmitted to the Commission of Experts examining alleged war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia.

The Council reiterated its demand that all the parties in the former Yugoslavia comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, and that those responsible for violations of the law should be held accountable in accordance with its relevant resolutions. The Council also called on all parties in the former Yugoslavia to guarantee the unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance and the security of the personnel responsible for it.

* * *

In the General Assembly today, speakers representing each region of the world and the Host Country paid tribute to the memory of President Melchior Ndadaye of Burundi, who was killed in a coup d'état last week. The representative of Burundi expressed appreciation for the unanimous condemnation of the coup and called for international support to restore the democratic authority in his country.

Meanwhile, Under-Secretary-General James Jonah continued his visit to the country as the Secretary-General's Envoy. He was expected to leave shortly for Nairobi, Kenya, and to report to the Secretary-General from there, according to a United Nations spokesman.

In a related development, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that a 24-member emergency mission would leave Geneva on Monday for Kigali, Rwanda, to join an earlier mission sent to coordinate relief programmes for refugees from Burundi. UNHCR has been mobilizing urgent relief assistance for nearly 600,000 refugees who have fled to Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire, and has allocated $5 million for the

(more)

operation. The earlier UNHCR mission reported no serious malnutrition problems in the refugee camps but expressed concern about possible outbreaks of dysentery, meningitis and measles with the onset of the rainy season.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council impose additional measures against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as not enough progress has been made towards implementing the Bicesse Peace Accords and Council resolutions. However, he said the Council should postpone such action until 1 December in view of the fact that UNITA and the Angolan Government were holding political talks in Zambia under the auspices of the United Nations. The Council last month imposed an oil and arms embargo against Angolan territory not controlled by the Angolan Government because UNITA had not implemented the Accords and its resolutions.

In a report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) dated 27 October, the Secretary-General noted that the talks had been made possible because both sides had taken positive steps, including UNITA's proclamation of a unilateral cease-fire, and that there were grounds for "cautious optimism". He said the United Nations should be ready to respond decisively to consolidate any progress that might be made in the coming days.

The Secretary-General recommended that UNAVEM II's authorized strength be increased from 50 to 175 military observers, from 18 to 60 police observers, and from 11 to 14 military paramedics. Extra international and local staff would also be needed. The additional personnel would be deployed in the event of a breakthrough, and would enhance UNAVEM II's ability to verify developments on the ground and to provide good offices. He appealed to the Government and UNITA to make full use of the present opportunity and to consolidate the progress made so far in the search for a solution to the conflict in Angola. He also appealed to the international community for a coordinated response to the country's humanitarian emergency, noting that stocks of relief supplies were inadequate.

* * *

The President of the General Assembly, Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana), addressing the First Committee during its meeting this morning in observance of Disarmament Week, said the international community was coming closer to taking decisive steps towards the reduction and, ultimately, the elimination of nuclear weapons. But, as the threat of nuclear confrontation between the superpowers faded, the growing danger of nuclear proliferation was causing new alarm in people's minds.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction had emerged as a dominant preoccupation during this year's general debate, he said. Several initiatives were announced to reverse this trend, the most important being the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to initiate negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such steps would serve to contain the number

(more)

of nuclear weapons, he added, while reinforcing expectations of an indefinite and unconditional extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Although the primary responsibility for regional security rested with States themselves, he said, the United Nations should be prepared to assist any group of States seeking to develop security measures and mechanisms for their region or subregion. He suggested that, in the context of the Agenda for Peace, a meeting might be held, under the Organization's auspices, of all relevant regional organizations, to explore ways to achieve closer cooperation with the United Nations in the field of peace and security.

* * *

The General Assembly has renewed its commitment to strengthening international cooperation in dealing with the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of drugs. In a resolution adopted yesterday without a vote, the Assembly called on States to ratify and implement a number of international instruments on drug control and to carry out effective control activities in cooperation with other States. It underlined the key roles of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), as well as the continuing need for United Nations action to be coordinated under the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control.

The Assembly identified a number of issues on which the Commission and the Economic and Social Council should make recommendations. Those included strengthening the fight against international criminal drug organizations and strengthening cooperation "to eradicate the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups, drug traffickers and their paramilitary gangs and other armed criminal groups".

The Commission and the Council were also asked to make recommendations concerning penalties for related offences, including money laundering and arms trafficking, and to consider how to increase attention to targeting the profits and money-laundering operations of drug traffickers, strengthening interdiction procedures and enforcing the control of essential chemicals.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) be continued at its present strength of five military observers with minimal support staff for a further three months. In a report to the Security Council dated 27 October, he recalled that he had previously determined that UNOMIG's original mandate had been invalidated by the general breakdown in the cease-fire in Abkhazia in September. He therefore recommended that the Mission have an interim mandate to maintain contacts with both sides to the conflict and with Russian military contingents, and to monitor and report on the situation, with particular reference to developments relevant to United Nations efforts to promote a comprehensive political settlement.

(more)

UNOMIG had established good relations with Abkhaz officials in Sukhumi and had been able to conduct patrols in the city, the Secretary-General noted. The Mission's continued presence in its present form and size would give the population visible evidence of international concern.

The Secretary-General reported that his Special Envoy for Georgia, Edouard Brunner, had had discussions in Geneva with Abkhaz and Georgian representatives. He had also been invited for discussions early next month with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov. In view of those developments, the Secretary-General said that he was planning for Ambassador Brunner to hold a first round of discussions with both parties late next month, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the Russian Federation present as facilitator. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would also be invited to attend as a participant. The discussions would focus on the question of a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, he said.

* * *

In response to a request from the Cambodian Government, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recently recommended that a military liaison team should be established in Phnom Penh for a single period of six months. In a report to the Council dated 27 October, he provided further details on the proposal. He said that the task of the 20-member team would be to liaise closely with the Cambodian Government and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, and to report to him on matters affecting security there. The team would assist the Government in dealing with residual military matters relating to the Paris Agreements, which were the basis for the country's transition to peaceful democratic government.

The Secretary-General stressed that, in contrast with the long term civilian activities of the integrated office which he proposed to establish in Phnom Penh, the military liaison team was an exceptional transitional measure of a short term nature. The activities of the two operations should be kept separate, though in practice there would be regular contact between the Chief Military Liaison Officer and the United Nations Representative, and a sharing of support services and resources where that would produce significant savings.

* *** *